

MINGUS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
1801 East Fir, Cottonwood, AZ 86326

GOVERNING BOARD
MINUTES OF MEETING

Mingus Union High School Library
Wednesday, February 5, 2025 4:00 PM

Governing Board:

Misty Cox
Austin Babcock
Ashley Koepnick
Taylor Bell
Frank Nevarez

Also Present:

Melody Herne, Superintendent
Bridget Hillman, Admin Asst.
Josh Fant, IT Director

OPENING

Call to Order

President Cox called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM

Roll Call

President Misty Cox, Vice President Ashley Koepnick, Board Member Taylor Bell, and Board Member Frank Nevarez were all present. Board Member Austin Babcock absent.

Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge was led by Board Member Nevarez.

Moment of Silence

A moment of silence was observed.

Adoption of Agenda

Motion was made by Vice President Koepnick to adopt the agenda as presented. Second was made by Board Member Nevarez.

Roll Call Vote:

President Misty Cox – Aye
Vice President Ashley Koepnick - Aye
Board Member Austin Babcock - Absent
Board Member Taylor Bell - Aye
Board Member Frank Nevarez - Aye

Motion passed 4-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were submitted.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

Policy Review and Updates

President Cox stated that the Board will have open dialogue and discussion for the review of policies A, A-E, and AD.

Superintendent Herne informs the Board she will take notes regarding the open dialogue and discussion the Board has of policies A, A-E, and AD. Once notes are compiled these items will be brought back to the Board as a future agenda item.

President Cox will also submit her notes to Superintendent Herne regarding the review of policies A, A-E, and AD.

Superintendent Herne states that Board Member Babcock will arrive to the meeting at approximately 5:00 pm.

The Board begins the review, dialogue and discussion of policy A. When Superintendent Herne's input is called upon it is given. The Board has a rich discussion and collaboration regarding updates that will be requested for policy A. President Cox will submit revisions for policy A to Superintendent Herne to move forward with placing revisions on February 13th agenda for first reading.

President Cox states that the Board will move onto the review, dialogue, and discussion of policy AD. As time may not permit a full discussion of Exhibit A-E, it is recommended that the Board send their recommendations to Superintendent Herne. Then collaboration on Exhibit A-E can take place in the future.

The Board begins the review, dialogue and discussion of policy AD. When Superintendent Herne's input is called upon it is given. She also informs the Board that revisions to this policy took place in 2021. The Board has a rich discussion and collaboration regarding updates that will be requested for policy AD.

Board Member Austin Babcock arrives at 4:56 pm.

Time does not allow the Board to fully review policy AD in its entirety. The Board was not able to cover sections titled; Parents, Community, and Students of policy AD. These sections will be placed on the agenda for the next Board meeting.

ACTION ITEMS - DISTRICT BUSINESS

Strategic Planning

President Cox request each Board Member write their pros and cons for each of the proposed vendors for the development of a Strategic Plan. The vendors are Cognia, ASBA, and Dr. Clement. Then President Cox asked each Board Member to share their pros for the vendors.

Vice President Koepnick had three pros for ASBA, two pros for Cognia, and four pros for Dr. Clement. Her pros for Dr. Clement are he can offer a more personable service, local (he is out of Flagstaff), lower cost, and the fastest timeline for his service.

Superintendent Herne also reminds the Board that Dr. Clement does not provide what is needed for the scope of the work that needs to be done. Dr. Clement might cost less however we will end up spending additional resources if we go with someone who is not able to provide everything that is needed. Her recommendation would be to utilize a vendor who could take the project from point A to Z with ongoing monitoring throughout the process. Mingus Union High School has not had a Strategic Plan in a long time and this process cannot be rushed.

Vice President Koepnick states that a pro she has for ASBA and Cognia is that they both provide monitoring.

Board Member Nevarez pros for Cognia are they are data driven, provide ongoing support from beginning to end, and will tailor the process to our needs. The one con is that Cognia has a more global perspective. Board Member Nevarez states the one pro he has for Dr. Clement is that he is data driven. His pros for ASBA are that they are data driven, aligned with the state, and are local. The con is that they do not help you with the implementation of the strategy. Board Member Nevarez also looked at the what the role of the teachers would be. The teaching staff currently does a lot, and he is uncertain how much more they can do.

President Cox states that the implementation of the Strategic Plan is the responsibility of the Superintendent.

Board Member Bell asked for clarification from Superintendent Herne, in the vendor presentation ASBA under information regarding stakeholder meetings the Board is not listed as participants, is this correct.

Superintendent Herne clarifies excluding Dr. Clement, both ASBA and Cognia will hold organizational meetings with the Board, Superintendent, and the organization's representative. During that organizational meeting they will decide who the stakeholders should be. The following meetings with stakeholders and team members the Board would not be a part of.

Board Member Bell also asked if we have an easy way to hold the company of choice accountable for the service we request. If the company is not performing to our expectations or deviates from the service agreed upon can we sever our contract.

Superintendent Herne states yes, we could sever the contract. In the organizational meeting that is what would be reviewed and agreed upon. We would outline our needs, and those needs are what we will be invoiced for.

Board Member Bell also asked are we able to customize our timeline. Some companies state that they could create a plan in six to twelve months, can we request the process only take four to six months.

Superintendent Herne states yes, we can but this is going to be a very comprehensive process and completing this in less than six months would not get us what we need. We need to take the time to listen to our stakeholders and develop our plan. Superintendent Herne feels that six months is a more realistic goal.

Board Member Bell states that Dr. Clement is not an option for her. Board Member Bell has experience in the strategic planning process and does not feel we will get the product we need in the short timeline

that Dr. Clement provides. Board Member Bell states that ASBA and Cognia are creditable and have a higher level of experience in the development of strategic plans. She also feels it is critical to have the Governing Board participate with the initial meeting where parameters are set for the Strategic Plan to follow. The concerns that we might have about ASBA or Cognia bringing in their own agenda that we might be opposed to regarding the direction that the Governing Board has for the school and Strategic Plan can be cut off at the first initial meeting. We can be very clear to the vendor as to who we are and what we want.

Board Member Babcock also states that he is not for Dr. Clement either. He agrees with Board Member Nevarez and Board Member Bell that the development of a Strategic Plan is a huge undertaking, and it cannot realistically be done in the short timeline that Dr. Clement suggested. He feels that ASBA and Cognia both have the capability to bring in guidelines and a structure for all aspects of putting a Strategic Plan together. Board Member Babcock liked the look of the Strategic Plans put together by Cognia. He also felt that the Strategic Plans from ASBA were too long and wordy.

President Cox pros for Dr. Clement were; years of experience from enhancing CTE courses and curriculum instruction, cost, he is recommended by ASA which is the company that recommended Superintendent Herne (she values their expertise), and is easy to get in touch with. President Cox feels that Dr. Clement would be willing to work with us and has given us a discount. He is less expensive and that would give us the flexibility to bring someone in to do the writing for us or he may stay on longer if we asked him. President Cox states why she feels that Cognia is not the way to go. Cognia is very expensive, long process (timeline), our goals have already been identified in the curriculum audit. She questions how we could have received high points for the accreditation and still have several items that need to be addressed. The Board has just completed changes to the Core Values, Mission and Vision and does not see why we would go with a company that reviewed us with the previous Core Values, Mission and Vision. In our accreditation report from Cognia they identified items of improvement, but we still obtained high scores. She questions how we can be an accredited institution when we lack so much. President Cox wants to know how has being with Cognia enhanced the Mingus Union High School District. When comparing the Curriculum Audit from 2019 and the Accreditation Review last year there are several similarities. So how much have we gained by being part of this organization. It could be harder to get in contact with them and they may use a template of how they operate. She has concerns with the process standards in which Cognia operates. Their standards do not align with how we want to move the District forward. She feels that they will push some of their agenda because she saw that in the accreditation report. If Cognia is selected, we are not certain of the experience level of our representative. Even though Cognia may have all our data it still will be a different department reviewing and we will have to submit information to them.

Board Member Bell states that could be a good thing. She too was not enthusiastic about the accreditation report that Cognia gave and she agrees with President Cox on this point. However, we would be utilizing a very different department with different teams and a different skill set. Board Member Bell has no doubt that Dr. Clement is experienced in education, and he knows what he is talking about but building a Strategic Plan is an entirely different skill set. We need someone who has this very specific set of skills. Board Member Bell hears what President Cox is saying regarding the infusion of certain ideas from other companies however, that is where we fall back on Superintendent Herne and the Board. We are responsible to hold the vendor accountable to our Mission and Vision.

President Cox also points out that Cognia is a global company and has a global viewpoint. She questions if they are adhering to global standards that may or may not align to our local standards. President Cox likes the fact that ASBA is local and easy to get in touch with.

Superintendent Herne states that both ASBA and Cognia have representatives that are in Arizona. ASBA representative would be Julie Bacon and Cognia Arizona Division representative is Dr. Anderson. She would be with us along with another Cognia representative who would be assigned directly for our Strategic Planning.

Board Member Babcock asked if Dr. Anderson would come for every meeting.

Superintendent Herne states that it is something we would discuss in that first organizational meeting.

Board Member Nevarez stated that is information he would like to know. Everything he read about Cognia was from a national or international perspective. ASBA was more from a state and local perspective. With Mingus as a one school District he would like to see the aspects of our community shine through. Another draw back with Cognia is that it seemed that they are very template driven. Board Member Nevarez prefers ASBA as the vendor of choice.

President Cox reiterates whoever is chosen as the vendor we need to dictate the stakeholder's involvement and be accountable of the timeframe.

Board Member Babcock asked for clarification on the process. His understanding is that we have the first meeting with the vendor, give them the vision to what we are looking for, after that there will be multiple meetings where Board Members will not be in attendance. Or would there be a possibility of us rotating through the meetings in order to make sure the vision we are looking for is established.

Superintendent Herne cautions the Board Members regarding participation in the following meetings because items in the follow-up meetings may come back to the Board for a vote. They might need to recuse themselves when it comes to the final vote of the plan if members attend follow up meetings.

Board Member Babcock asked then how we will know if the process is not going in the direction the Board wants the process to go.

Superintendent Herne asked the Board Members to recall in the Strategic Planning presentation that there will be certain time frames when items will be brought back to the Board to monitor the process. In the initial set up meeting it will be discussed how this will be done. The Board will oversee the setting up the Strategic Planning Team. The Board will play a part in establishing any teams/committees needed for the process.

Board Member Babcock has been apart of larger committees and done work with those committees then when it came time for the Board to take action the items did not pass. He wants to make sure that the work, time, and effort of our stakeholders and any team members would not be denied if the board is not on the same page as the committees. This can lead to frustration if the stakeholders think that the work they produce is aligned with us and it isn't. So how do we make sure that our vision is aligned with the work produced early in the process.

Superintendent Herene states that is what will be established at the very first meeting with the vendor that is selected. The Board will determine how information is brought back to them and how formal it will be. Somethings may be in the weekly update or work sessions with the vendors present. All of this information will be discussed and agreed upon during the first organizational meeting.

Motion was made by Board Member Nevarez to approve ASBA as the vendor for the development of a Strategic Plan. Second was made by Board Member Bell.

Roll Call Vote:

- President Misty Cox – Aye
- Vice President Ashley Koepnick - Aye
- Board Member Austin Babcock - Aye
- Board Member Taylor Bell - Aye
- Board Member Frank Nevarez - Aye

Motion passed 5-0.

REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by President Cox to adjourn. Second was made by Vice President Koepnick.

Roll Call Vote:

- Board President Misty Cox – Aye
- Vice President Ashley Koepnick - Aye
- Board Member Austin Babcock - Aye
- Board Member Taylor Bell - Aye
- Board Member Frank Nevarez - Aye

Motion passed 5-0.

Adjournment: 5:51 pm

Board President Misty Cox

Vice President Ashley Koepnick